

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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UNCLAS MONTREAL 800

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, BGEN, CA
SUBJ: HOW DO YOU TRANSLATE "MUNCHKIN"?

1. MONTREAL PRESS REPORTED MAY 18 THAT OFFICIALS OF QUEBEC'S MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE HAD VISITED SIX DUNKIN DONUT STORES IN MONTREAL AREA LAST MONTH AND DESTROYED 15,000 "MUNCHKIN" AND "BIG BUNCH BUCKETS" BECAUSE CONTAINERS WERE LABELLED WITH SLOGANS ONLY IN ENGLISH. IN ONE STORE, OVERZEALOUS OFFICIALS ALSO THREW 12,000 BAGS THAT CARRIED ONLY COMPANY LOGO, WITH NAME DUNKIN DONUTS, IN GARBAGE TRUCK.
2. SPOKESMAN FOR AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT SAID SEIZURES HAD BEEN MADE AFTER REPEATED WARNINGS TO THE AMERICAN-OWNED CHAIR TO HAVE CONTAINERS CONFORM TO QUEBEC LABELLING LAWS MAKING USE OF FRENCH OBLIGATORY.
3. AS ACTION AFFECTED U.S. COMPANY AND HAS POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER COMPANIES FACING LABELLING PROBLEMS, WE CHECKED WITH MANAGER OF ONE OF THE STORES. HE SAID THAT STORES HAD BEEN GIVEN PERMISSION TO USE UNILINGUAL BOXES AND BUCKETS IN STOCK UNTIL THEY COULD BE REPLACED WITH BILINGUAL CONTAINERS, WHICH HAS NOW BEEN UNCLASSIFIED

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DONE. (THE TERM "MUNCHKIN" HAS BEEN GIVEN A TEMPORARY REPRIEVE, HOWEVER, AS NO LINGUIST HAS YET COME UP WITH A SUITABLE TRANSLATION.) WHILE MANAGER DID NOT WISH TO CONTEST ISSUE OF DISPOSAL OF BOXES AND BUCKETS, HE HAD HIRED LAWYER TO PROTEST ACTION CONCERNING BAGS THAT CARRIED NO WRITING OTHER THAN NAME DUNKIN DONUTS, AS PRESENT QUEBEC REGULATIONS DO NOT REQUIRE COMPANY NAMES TO BE FRANCIZED. MANAGER SAID THAT GOVERNMENT HAD ADMITTED THAT IT MADE

MISTAKE WITH REGARD TO BAGS AND HAD AGREED TO REIMBURSE HIM FOR COST OF BAGS.

4. NEW LANGUAGE BILL, PENDING IN QUEBEC NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, DOES CALL, HOWEVER, FOR EVENTUAL FRANCIZATION OF COMPANY NAMES. WHEN LEGISLATION IS PASSED, MANAGER SAID HE SUPPOSED COMPANY WOULD HAVE TO CHANGE ITS NAME TO LES BEIGNES DUNKIN TO DO BUSINESS IN QUEBEC.

5. STORY WAS WIDELY REPORTED IN MONTREAL PRESS. FOR SOME READERS, INCIDENT PROBABLY SERVED TO CONFIRM THEIR ANXIETIES ABOUT DIFFICULTIES OF DOING BUSINESS UNDER NEW LANGUAGE REGIME, WITH POSSIBILITY ALWAYS EXISTING OF AUTOCRATIC INSPECTORS MAKING SPOT DECISIONS.
HARPER

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